

Message Text

SECRET

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S E C R E T LAGOS 13026

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, RH
SUBJECT: RHODESIA TALKS

1. I WAS ONLY INVITED GUEST THIS EVENING AT UK HIGH COMMISSIONERS SUPPER FOR LORD CARVER AND LTGEN PREM CHAND AT FCO REQUEST. THEY LEAVE AT MIDNIGHT TONIGHT VIA COMMERCIAL FLIGHT TO LONDON AND REPORT TO DAVID OWEN TOMORROW, THURSDAY AFTERNOON. FCO INSTRUCTED LORD CARVER THIS AFTERNOON TO RETURN TO LONDON DIRECTLY RATHER THAN VIA DAR ES SALAAM.

2. LORD CARVER TOLD ME HE HAD SEEN LITTLE POINT IN HIS PERSONALLY SEEKING NYERERE'S IDEAS ON THE KAUNDA THESIS AND WAS RELIEVED THAT FCO APPARENTLY SHARED SAME VIEWS. HE SAID NYERE'S RESPONSE COULD BE PREDICTED, IN THE SENSE THAT NYERE COULD HARDLY BE EXPECTED TO CONCUR IN A REJECTION OF ELECTION AND SUCH A SIMPLISTIC ESPOUSAL OF THE PATRIOTIC FRONT.

3. AS FOR THE VIEWS OF OBASANJO, WITH WHOM HE MET THIS
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AFTERNOON, LORD CARVER SAID HE WAS MUCH IMPRESSED WITH HIS PRAGMATIC AND REALISTIC APPROACH. OBASANJO SAID HE APPRECIATED KAUNDA'S FRUSTRATION. KAUNDA'S PROPOSAL WAS ONE OF TWO OPTIONS. THERETWERE NO MORE. EITHER DO AS KAUNDA SUGGESTS, I.E., TURN THE GAME OVER TO THE PATRIOTIC FRONT AND LET THEM HAVE AT IT WITH ALL POSSIBLE SUPPORT, OR MAINTAIN THE PRESENT SCENARIO BUT PRESSURE SOUTH AFRICA TO GET RID OF SMITH. EITHER

WAY THE MAJOR STUMBLING BLOCK IS SMITH, ACCORDING TO OBASANJO. SMITH HAD TO BE GOTTEN RID OF. OBASANJO SAID PRESIDENT CARTER HAD TOLD HIM IN WASHINGTON THAT THE U.S. QUOTE WOULD LEAVE NO STONE UNTURNED UNQUOTE TO ACCOMPLISH THIS WHEN AND IF IT BECAME NECESSARY.

4. WHICHEVER OPTION WAS CHOSEN, OBASANJO FEARED THE POSSIBILITY OF EVENTUAL BREAKDOWN OF ORDER AND OUTBREAK OF CIVIL WAR WITHIN RHODESIA. HE DID NOT MENTION HIS INTEREST IN TRAINING THE FUTURE RHODESIAN ARMY, AS HE HAS WITH US BUT STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE NEW ARMY'S BEING LOYAL TO THE COUNTRY RATHER TO ANY PARTICULAR LEADER. PREM CHAND SAID HE DIDNT SEE HOW NIGERIANS COULD TRAIN OTHERS WHEN THEY HAD SUCH AN OVERBLOWN AND UNTRAINED ARMY OF THEIR OWN, AND WAS STRUCK BY THE FACT THAT BOTH CHIEF OF STAFF YAR'ADUA AND ARMY COMMANDER DANJUMA ACCOMPANIED OBASANJO IN THE MEETING BUT SAID NARY A WORD. GARBA, ON THE OTHER HAND, APPEARED NERVOUS AND EXCITED TO PREM CHAND AND IN MARKED CONTRAST WITH OBASANJO'S COOL AND REASONABLE DEMEANOR.

5. LORD CARVER SAID HE EXPECTED TO HAVE TALKS ON MALTA WITH NKOMO AND MUGABE TOGETHER. BBC HAD LEAKED THIS ALREADY, HE SAID. MEANWHILE SMITH WAS PROPOSING QUOTE POLITICAL UNQUOTE RATHER THAN QUOTE MILITARY UNQUOTE OR QUOTE CEASEFIRE UNQUOTE TALKS TO BE HELD IN SALISBURY WITH SMITH, THE U.K., CHIEF CHIRAU, MUZOREWA, AND SITHOLE. LORD CARVER WOULD PUT THIS
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OPTION TO OWEN.

6. IT WAS A GLOOMY EVENING. BOTH LORD CARVER AND PREM CHAND FREELY ADMITTED THEY BELIEVED THEIR MANDATE HAS ABOUT RUN DOWN. LORD CARVER SAID QUOTE WE'VE PUT THE CART BEFORE THE HORSE BY TRYING TO ARRANGE THE MILITARY THING WITHOUT A POLITICAL FRAMEWORK WITHIN WHICH TO FIT IT UNQUOTE. PREM CHAND SAID QUOTE I'LL BE LOOKING FOR ANOTHER JOB IN A FEW DAYS, UNQUOTE.
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